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Weights of some birds from Fiji

by Michael K. Tarburton

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As there is a paucity of recorded body weights for birds from the South Pacific in both the literature and in museum data those recorded from mist-netting operations in Fiji are presented here along with some obtained from the National Museum of New Zealand. As workers begin to investigate topics such as flight, ecological variations, taxonomy, energetics and growth rates, the need for weights of free-living birds from the low latitudes of the South Pacific will increase.

The bulk of these data were recorded on Ohaus triple beam balances between January 1974 and December 1976. The remainder were measured on Pesola spring balances. All birds were free flying adults unless otherwise stated. The island of origin and, where known, the sex of the bird are shown and apply to succeeding data until changed. The major netting sites on Viti Levu were the mountain forests of Nadarivatu and the Tailevu lowlands.

The order used is that of Walters (1980) and the nomenclature is that used by Clunie (1984). All measurements are given in grams.

- Sula sula* RED-FOOTED BOOBY. Vatu-i-Ra: 773, 773, 893, 925, 978, 998, 998, 1010, 1041. Yabu: 915.
- Sula leucogaster* BROWN BOOBY. Yabu: 1100, 1300, 1400, 1400, 1450.
- Puffinus pacificus* WEDGE-TAILED SHEARWATER. Bulia: 222, M 236 (thin birds).
- Fregata ariel* LESSER FRIGATE BIRD. Vatu-i-Ra: F 1021, 1133. Ono: M 625, F 975. Yabu: M765, F 810, 885, 990.
- Fregata minor* GREAT FRIGATE BIRD. Yabu: M 1300, F 1100.
- Egretta sacra* REEF HERON. Ono: 620, 695.
- Circus approximans* PACIFIC HARRIER. Vatulele: M 515. Viti Levu: M 550. Ono: M 486.
- Accipiter rufitorques* FIJI GOSHAWK. Ono: M 209.
- Gallus gallus* JUNGLE FOWL. Taveuni: M 950, 1030, 1100, F 990. Vatulele: M 850, 1010, F 650.
- Gallirallus philippensis* BANDED RAIL. Ono: F 265, unsexed 225, 248, 303.
- Pluvialis dominica* EASTERN GOLDEN PLOVER. Ono: 126.
- Sterna bergii* CRESTED TERN. Ono: 315, 345, 350.
- Sterna sunatrana* BLACK-NAPED TERN. Astrolab Lagoon: 105, 105, 106, 108, 108, 110, 112, 112, 120.
- Anous minutus* BLACK NODDY. Vatu-i-Ra: 101, 107, 114, 125, 126, 133, 134, 141, 143, 156, 166, 177. Mabulau: 97, 99, 102, 105. Immatures Vatu-i-Ra: 70, 82, 86, 87, 101, 108.
- Anous stolidus* COMMON NODDY. Vatu-i-Ra: 198, 200, 275, 285.
- Columba vitiensis* WHITE-THROATED PIGEON. Viti Levu: M 365, 395, 415 (no fat), F 340, 375. Vatulele: M 345, 370, 390, F 320, 340, 360. Taveuni: 305. Yadua: F 268.
- Phigys solitarius* COLLARED LORY. Viti Levu: M 90.2, F 71.2. Ono: M 92, F 75, 82.
- Prosopia taubensis* RED-BREASTED MUSK PARROT. Ono: 205, 210.
- Tyto alba* BARN OWL. Viti Levu: M 340, 345. Bulia: F 371. Taveuni: F 360. Ono: F 340.
- Aerodramus spodiopygius* WHITE-RUMPED SWIFTLET. Viti Levu: 8.2 ± 0.06 ($\bar{x} \pm s.e.$, $n=102$).
- Halcyon chloris* COLLARED KINGFISHER. Viti Levu: 45.8, 46.9. Ono: 54, 56, 64.
- Hirundo tahitica* PACIFIC SWALLOW. Vanua Levu: M 18, F 17, 17.5. Ono: M 17.5, F 17.5. Vatulele: M 17, 18, F 18, 18, 19. Taveuni: M 18.5.
- Lalage maculosa* POLYNESIAN TRILLER. Viti Levu: 25.5.
- Pycnonotus cafer* RED-VENTED BULBUL. Viti Levu: 34.6, 36.4, 39.3, 39.5, 42.5.
- Turdus poliocephalus* ISLAND THRUSH. Viti Levu: 55.4, 57.7, 61.2.
- Vitia ruficapilla* FIJI WARBLER. Viti Levu: 9.8, 10.7, 13.6, 14.1.
- Mayornis lessoni* SLATY FLYCATCHER. Ono: 11.0.
- Myiagra vanikorensis* VANIKORO BROADBILL. Viti Levu: 11.7. Ono: 10.5, 12, 12.5.
- Myiagra azureocapilla* BLUE-CRESTED BROADBILL. Viti Levu: F 11.1.
- Rhipidura spilodera* SPOTTED FANTAIL. Viti Levu: 12.1, 12.3, 12.3.
- Petroica multicolor* SCARLET ROBIN. Viti Levu: F 9.1. M 9.9.
- Clytorhynchus vitiensis* FIJI SHRIKEBILL. Viti Levu: 24.8, 25.5, 26.8, 27.7. Ono: 20.
- Pachycephala pectoralis* GOLDEN WHISTLER. Viti Levu: M 30.7, 31. F 31.4. Ono: M 24.5. F 25.5.
- Zosterops lateralis* GREY-BREASTED WHITE-EYE. Viti Levu: 9.5, 10.3, 10.6, 11.5, 11.7, 12.0. Ono: 11.3.
- Foulehaio carunculata* WATTLED HONEYEATER. Viti Levu: 25.2, 27.8, 29.4, 34.1, 35.9, 36.1, 36.3, 36.4, 36.8, 38, 38.7, 39.3, 39.5, 40.5, 40.8, 40.8, 41.5, 43.5, 45.4.
- Myzomela jugularis* ORANGE-BREASTED HONEYEATER. Ono: 9. Viti Levu: 7.1, 7.4, 7.6, 8.2, 8.2, 8.5, 8.5, 8.8.
- Erythrura cyanovirens* RED-HEADED PARROT FINCH. Viti Levu: M 10.4, 12.5, 12.8, 12.8, 12.9, 13.3, 13.6. F 11.9, 12.1, 12.3. Imm 12.8.
- Erythrura kleinschmidti* PINK-BILLED PARROT FINCH. Viti Levu: 21.0.
- Estrilda amandava* STRAWBERRY FINCH. Viti Levu: M 8.3 F 8.6, 8.8.
- Padda oryzivora* JAVA SPARROW. Viti Levu: 26.6.
- Acridotheres tristis* INDIAN MYNAH. Viti Levu: 105.3.
- Acridotheres fuscus* JUNGLE MYNAH. Viti Levu: 74.7, 76.2, 79.2, 81, 84, 86.4, 86.6, 90.6, 91.9, 101.4.
- Aplonis tabuensis* POLYNESIAN STARLING. Dravuni: 52.
- Artamus mentalis* FIJI WOODSWALLOW. Vanua Levu: 41. Viti Levu: M 41, 41, 42, 45, F 40, 40, 43, 43, 45. Taveuni: M 40, F 41, 41.5, 42, 46, 48. Nananu-i-Ra: M 33.

It appears that *Halcyon chloris* is larger on Ono than on Viti Levu. It is clear that there is overlap in the weights of *Fregata ariel* and *Fregata minor*. Immature *Anous minutus* can often be detected by their lighter weights, though their shorter bills and smaller white caps are more reliable (Tarburton 1978). Sexual dimorphism appears in the weights of *Columba vitiensis* and *Gallus gallus* with males being the larger. The large range in the weights of *Foulehaio carunculata* may indicate that sexual dimorphism applies there also.

Some of the species included here are also found either in neighbouring island groups or are cosmopolitan, and so comparisons can be made. The two *Puffinus pacificus* were much lighter than five from Tuamotu and Gambier which weighed 320–385 g and averaged 370 g (Lacan & Maugin 1974). The range of *Sula sula* was smaller at both ends than in 10 specimens from Tuamotu which ranged from 780 to 1120 g (Lacan & Maugin 1974). Six *Sula leucogaster* from Tuamotu and Gambier had a similar range (1120–1600 g) to this Fijian sample. One of the reef herons from Ono was considerably heavier than a sample of 45 from Tuamotu and Gambier which ranged from 345 to 625 g (Lacan & Maugin 1974). Both species of *Anous* also averaged heavier than those from the Tuamotu and Gambier islands. Fijian *Circus approximans* weights are below the range of that species in New Zealand (Fox 1977). There, males ranged from 525 to 697 g (\bar{x} = 609.4, n = 21) and females are heavier with an average of 820.5 g (n = 29, range 700–1016).

Weight changes in migrants often vary more than 100% and *Pluvialis dominica* is apparently no exception. The bird from Ono was taken on 14 May, only three weeks later than two birds taken in Tahiti which weighed 115 and 215 g (Lacan & Maugin 1974).

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New Information on Birds in Cameroon

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In the course of two visits to Cameroon in March–April 1990 and again in December 1990–January 1991, observations were made which represent extensions to the known range of a number of species, and data were